



HICKORY UNITED EPC | FEB. 2025

THE HICKORY MESSENGER



Pastor's Pen

BY PASTOR TOM JONES

The past few months have been characterized by cold, snow and illness. I tested positive for Covid in December and didn't really recover for about 5 weeks. Needless to say, I am looking forward to my February vacation with my daughter in Los Angeles. The warmer temperatures should bring healing and raise my spirits! I am also looking forward to Spring and an end to the cold, snow and illnesses.

Years ago someone told me that I spent too much time wishing my life away because I was always so focused on the future and not so much on the present. For me, that is very true. I do struggle to appreciate the blessings of each and every day. I make the mistake of focusing on what I do not have instead of being thankful for what I have right now.

My blessings are abundant. I woke up this morning in a warm apartment and have more than enough food. I took a hot shower and drove to work in a car that is nicely heated. I am, at this moment, sitting at my desk bundled but warm and secure. During the time I was sick members of the church provided me with food and checked up on me regularly. Many were praying for me.

There is an old saying that says, "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." I would like to change that quote to better fit this current situation and say, "It is better to share the warmth than it is to curse the cold." I am blessed because some wonderful members of this church shared the warmth with me.

May we go and do likewise!

Love and Blessings, Pastor Tom

WORSHIP:

Sundays | 10:00 am

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Sundays | 8:45 am

THIS ISSUE:

Pastor's Pen | cover

Deacon's Corner | 2

Misc. News | 3

Helene Thank You | 4

Haiti Update | 5

Kids & Youth | 6

Calendar | 7

THE VISION

Leading one another into growing relationships with Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit all for the glory of God.

THE MISSION

Reaching upward to God,
Growing inward with God, Serving outward for God.

DEACON'S CORNER

Fort Cherry Helping Hands

Donations of canned goods, vegetables and boxed cereal and pasta are requested for collection on Sundays when Communion is served. These items will be distributed through the Fort Cherry Helping Hands program to families in our area who require additional assistance. Thank you for giving generously to help these families. Please place items on the metal rack located in the main entrance foyer.

Meals on Wheels Seeking Drivers

Deacons are seeking drivers and dedicated days to help deliver meals on wheels to locals in need within our community throughout the year. If you are interested, please contact Deacon Kathy Yonker: 412-780-2462.



UPCOMING:



February Communion

Sunday, Feb. 2
10:00 am | Sanctuary



Blood Drive: Save the Date

Saturday, Mar. 29
Covenant Center | Hickory United EPC

DEACONS:

DEB REA, MODERATOR

BOB SPENCER, VICE MODERATOR

LOIS TEMPLETON, SECRETARY

GRETTA MACINTYRE, TREASURER

KEN ALRUTZ

JANET GREENE

SANDY MARTINEK

RICH MOORE

KATHY YONKER

Many thanks and blessings to Deb Rea, Ken Alrutz and Janet Greene who faithfully served our church and community for the past three years who officially end their terms at the end of January 2025.

DEACON'S ROLE IN THE EPC:

According to Scripture, those who bear the office of Deacon should especially exhibit the spiritual qualities of the Christian and should be steady and reliable. The first duty of the Deacon is sympathy and service, and together the Board of Deacons carries out the ministry of compassion. As the law of love places certain duties upon each Christian, the Deacon is especially bound to fulfill those duties and to be an example to all.

Ref: The Ordination and Installation of Deacons Book of Government 14-1E.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS...

NOTES OF Thanks

The family of Duane Scott would like to thank each and every one of you who have prayed us through the past 2 months. Your kind words, cards and prayers have been so comforting through all the uncertainty. We are truly blessed with such faithful prayer warriors. Thank you so much!

~SHARON MERCKLE

Dave and I want to thank everyone for all the prayers for Dave and our family. He has finished 6 chemo treatments and 6 weeks of radiation and had no side effects and no hair loss. He still needs prayers for the heart valve replacement, which we do not know yet when it will be. He sees the cardiologist on January 30. Praise and glory to God and answered prayers.

~CORKY NARIGON

What a blessing you are to our program! Thank you so much for your very generous donation of \$750.00. As our numbers continue to grow, your gift will go a long way to ensure that we can continue to provide home cooked meals for our Seniors every day. We truly could not do this without the kindness and generosity of bighearted people such as you. Thank you again for blessing us.

~MCDONALD COMMUNITY MEALS ON WHEELS

Thanks again for always supporting our Fort Cherry Helping Hands. We look forward to servicing our children in 2025.

~BRIANNE EILER

I want to thank my church family for their prayers, cards, and encouragement. I am healing and have some more to go on this journey. Thank you.

~GEORGIE TURK



Experiencing God #2

BY BRUCE SHARPNACK
Stewardship & Benevolence Committee

Reality of Experiencing God #2:

God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal. God is always at work around you. We discussed this a bit last month. His most important work is an active, unending pursuit of you! He loves each of you so much that He sent His only Son to redeem and restore you. John 3:16-17

From this real and personal love relationship comes real and personal joy. The outworking of this joy is your work with Him - abundant - flourishing, to save and restore His world. "Thy Kingdom come."

This is the true and beautiful meaning of Christian stewardship. This is the work of Christian living. Nothing can ever separate us from this love, mercy, and grace of God.

Out of God's love for you, consider making a commitment, a pledge, to the restoring ministry and mission of Hickory United EPC this month. You experience God through giving.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Food & Fellowship Potluck

Sunday, Feb. 9 | 11:15 am | Covenant Center
Dish Drop-off in Kitchen 8:30-9:55 am



Save the Date: Upward Celebration!

Saturday, Feb. 22 | TBA | Covenant Center
For all Upward players and families!



Directory Update Collection Days

Sundays Feb. 2 & 9 | Pre & Post Service
Drop-off Directories at Welcome Desk!



Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, Mar. 5 | 6 pm | Sanctuary
With Imposition of Ashes

LETTER FROM HUEPC

HURRICANE HELENE RELIEF MISSION

DEAR FRIENDS,

During the second week of November in 2024, a team of mission volunteers from Hickory United EPC traveled to the area of North Carolina ravaged by Hurricane Helene. Our team focused on the small community of Green Mountain, which suffered terrible damage from 38 feet of flood water. Through the generous donations of members and non-members we were able to provide equipment and services to flood victims. More importantly, we were able to show the love of Jesus to strangers who had never met us and most likely will never meet us again.

GOODS AND SERVICES PROVIDED:

- 10 chain saws with bar oil and tools
- 11 generators & wiring to hook up generators
- 1000+ pounds of clothes
- Water well rebuild equipment and sanitizing for 3 wells
- 12 sets of propane heaters with tanks and hoses ready to be used

Thank YOU for your generous heart in donations of money, clothing, equipment, time, service and prayer for our brothers and sisters in North Carolina!

With sincere gratitude,

Hickory United Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Hickory United Evangelical Presbyterian Church

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.”

HEART FOR HAITI

LA CROIX NEW TESTAMENT MISSION | 1.18.25



THE SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE IN WORSHIP AND PRAYING

One of the programs the kids don't want to miss on Friday is chapel. As the room is too small to accommodate all the children, we had to divide them by class. So we usually add to the chapel program Bible stories, worship, and Bible contests. We have just added special prayer requests. This week, they began to pray for the American people, especially the city of Los Angeles, California.

As Jesus said in Matthew 19:14, "Let the little children come to me and do not forbid them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them." I believe that from the beginning, a child must learn to serve God. I firmly believe that God answers the prayers of children as well as adults. So, we will continue to pray to God for the American people and our friends in the United States.



"Let the little children come to me and do not forbid them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them."

MATTHEW 19:14



CONTINUATION OF THE COOKING CLASS AND COMMERCIAL PASTRY COURSE

Many young women are very interested in the cooking class and commercial baking. In the practice they have already done, Chef Roudeline shows them how to make dishes in Haitian culture and in other foreign countries. The chef works so that students can discover other foreign cuisines but also to start their own business from what they learn in commercial bakeries. So, one of God's greatest purposes for the New Testament Mission is to invest in people. This is what the mission does to set up schools in faraway places, where people have no one to help them. Where even the people of the government do not even know the existence of these people who live in these remote villages.

So, how can we not thank the friends, sponsors and donors of the mission who always invest in this ministry! As we always say, thanks will never be enough. But we know that our faithful God will not fail to bless you.



We are so grateful to the Lord for His mercy and love towards us. We thank all of you for your meaningful support at New Testament Mission. These great activities were done thanks to your generosity. We pray that the Lord will continue to pour His blessings over your life. Many blessings to you all! We are so grateful to the Lord for His mercy and love towards us. We thank all of you for your meaningful support to LaCroix New Testament Mission. These great activities are possible thanks to your generosity. We pray that the Lord will continue to pour His blessings over your life. Many blessings to you all!!

KIDS & YOUTH

HICKORY UNITED Kids

In Sunday School, the Kindergarten-5th graders will be learning about some of the "I am" statements that Jesus makes, like "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). These "I am" statements reveal who Jesus is and what he came to do, and they help us know how we can respond to Jesus and know him more deeply.

HARVEST STUDENT MINISTRY

The 6th-12th graders in Sunday School are reading through the Gospel of Mark! Each week, we discuss which characteristics of Jesus we notice in the focal passage, and which we would like to emulate more in our own lives.

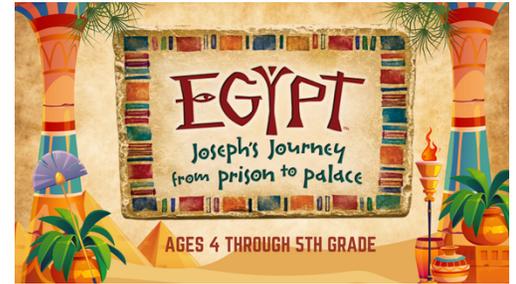
UPCOMING EVENTS

SUNDAY SCHOOL 8:45 AM | YOUTH GROUP SUNDAYS 6:30-8 PM



Kids: KidVenture Returns March 4!

Tuesdays | 5:30-7:00 pm | Youth Loft / CC
Spring Session runs March 4 - May 13



Kids: VBS Egypt - Joseph's Journey

June 16-20 | 9 am-12 pm | Hickory United
Closing Celebration June 20 | 6 pm



Harvest: After Dark Game Night!

Friday, Feb. 14 | 8-10 pm | Covenant Center
Ice cream bar and games after Upward!



Harvest: Prayer & Worship Night

February 28 | 6-8 pm | Youth Loft
Night of singing and prayer for Grades 6-12!

EPiC Retreat 2025

BY MICHAELA WALKER
Youth Ministry Director

Our 6th-12th graders had so much fun on this year's EPiC Retreat with other EPC Youth Groups! This year's retreat theme was "Multiply": one of the EPC's 4 Gospel Priorities. Speaker Caleb Musselman shared how the church's multiplication begins with our personal and individual relationship with God. Our relationship with God is then strengthened by our relationships with other believers. Then, together with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we invite others to join us at the table of fellowship with our Lord. Thus, the church multiplies! The highlight of our camp games and activities was the sledding competition, which Hickory won! We look forward to next year's EPiC Retreat!



FEBRUARY CALENDAR

ALL EVENTS, DATES & TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

SPECIAL DATES THIS MONTH

- 2/2 **Communion | 10 am (S)**
Directory Collection (Drop-off at Welcome Desk)
- 2/8 **CC Reserved 3-8 pm**
- 2/9 **Scout Sunday | 10 am (S)**
Directory Collection (Drop-off at Welcome Desk)
- 2/14 **Valentine's Day - Preschool Closed**
Harvest After Dark 6th-12th Grade | 8 pm (CC)
- 2/16 **Directory Pick-up | Welcome Desk**
CC Reserved 12-6 pm

- 2/17 **President's Day - Preschool Closed**
Newsletter Deadline
- 2/22 **Upward Celebration | TBA (CC)**
- 2/28 **Harvest Prayer & Worship Night | 6-8 pm (YL)**

NEXT MONTH

- 3/2 **Communion | 10 am (S)**
- 3/4 **KidVenture Resumes | 5:30 pm (YL/CC)**
- 3/5 **Ash Wednesday Service | 6 pm (S)**

(CC) Covenant Center (CR) Choir Room (FH) Fellowship Hall
(LB) Library (P) Parlor (YL) Youth Loft (S) Sanctuary

CHECK ONLINE CALENDAR FOR FULL LIST OF RECURRING WEEKLY/MONTHLY MEETINGS: hickorychurch.com/calendar

Staff CONTACTS:

PASTORAL & MINISTRY

TRANSITIONAL PASTOR

Rev. Tom Jones | (724) 356-4424 (Ext. 102)
(724) 464-7782 (cell)

pastor@hickoryunitedepc.org

YOUTH MINISTRY DIRECTOR

Michaela Walker | (724) 356-4424 (Ext. 103)

youth@hickoryunitedepc.org

MUSIC MINISTRY DIRECTOR

Tim VanNasdale | (724) 356-4424 (Ext. 111)

tim.vannasdale@hickoryunitedepc.org

LAY PASTOR

Lou Templeton | (724) 356-7835

ADMINISTRATIVE / SUPPORT

OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Michelle Danna | (724) 356-4424

office@hickoryunitedepc.org

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Lynn VanNasdale | (724) 356-4424 (Ext. 106)

communications@hickoryunitedepc.org

TREASURER

Melissa Fluharty | treasurer@hickoryunitedepc.org

ASST. TREASURER & CONSULT

Linda Carter

AUDIO VISUAL TECHNICIAN

David Sykut | david.sykut@hickoryunitedepc.org

FACILITIES

FACILITY ASSISTANT

Will Smith | (724) 356-4424

HICKORY CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

Ashley Lewis | (724) 356-7337

(724) 356-4424 (Ext. 101)

hickorypreschool@hickoryunitedepc.org



CHURCH JUST GOT AN upgrade.

- Submit Online Prayer Requests
- Live Streaming & Sermon Replay
- Virtual & Audio Bible Features
- Fast Calendar Access
- Member Messaging
- Online Giving
- AND MORE!



Download now!

JOIN THE PRAYER TREE:

communications@hickoryunitedepc.org

SUBMIT A PRAYER REQUEST:

hickorychurch.com/prayer



@HICKORYCHURCH



HICKORYCHURCH.COM



724-356-4424



OFFICE@HICKORYUNITEDPC.ORG



210 MAIN STREET, HICKORY, PA.



GET THE NEWS!

TEXT 'HICKORYUNITED' TO 84576 & JOIN THE MAILING LIST!